

REMARKS

Applicant's attorneys greatly appreciate the courtesies extended by Examiner Le during the office interview conducted on July 13, 2004.

At that time, a copy of U.S. Patent 6,473,513 to Shennib, et al. was provided to Examiner Le and requested to be made of record subject to the following proviso that the '513 patent is not hereby conceded to be prior art to the present application or certain of Applicant's copending applications which claim priority to earlier filed provisional applications. Applicant reserves the right to copy the claims of the '513 patent in one or more copending applications for purposes of provoking an interference.

The present application contains claims 1-44 which stand reject either as anticipated under 102(b) based on Shennib '348 or as obvious in view of Shennib '348 and the "well known prior art".

In the Office interview, it was pointed out that unlike the structure in the '348 patent, the apparatus of the present application provides a tip having 2 parts which in the preferred embodiment are molded in one piece. One of the parts was called a "boot" at the interview (but is more appropriately referred to as a housing or receptacle in the claims of the application (see item 34, page 8 of the application), and the other, the mushroom shaped tip per se 18.

Therefore, the independent claims of the application (claims 1, 12, 23, 24 and 35 have been amended herein, not by way of limitation, but to clarify this distinction.

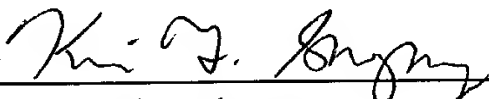
Accordingly, with these amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are patentably distinct and non-obvious over the cited references and early allowance of the pending claims is requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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